Conference on Disarmament

14 September 2018

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Note Verbale dated 13 September 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, transmitting the text of the Statement by the Syrian Arab Republic in response on baseless allegations regarding CD Presidency on US -UK – France repeated violations of International Law in light of their military aggression on the Syrian Arab Republic and their support to terrorism in Syria.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, presents its complements to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and has the honour to attach herewith the Statement by the Syrian Arab Republic in response to baseless allegations regarding CD Presidency, and on US - UK - France repeated violations of International Law in light of their military aggression on the Syrian Arab Republic and their support to terrorism in Syria.

The Permanent Mission requests that the attached statement be registered and circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and be included in the annual report of the CD.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, the assurances of its highest consideration.

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Statement by the Syrian Arab Republic on the US disinformation campaign in the Conference on Disarmament.

1. The statement consigned by a number of CD members comes in the context of a demonization campaign against the Syrian Arab Republic in different UN forums. The majority of the co-signers are part of the war against Syria, and are, therefore, not morally fit to preach about international law violations. Those countries are involved in repeated acts or threats of military aggression against Syria, occupation of Syrian territories, support of terrorism, and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure inside Syria. The American-led illegal military coalition, which operates without any authorization from Security Council or the Syrian Government, has committed war crimes, as American and allied air strikes caused the death of thousands of civilians and the total destruction of the city of Raqqa. US, UK and France were involved in military aggression against Syria in blatant violation of UN Charter and international law. Support to different Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups by US and its allies in the region, and the involvement of some other European countries in illegal shipments of arms and ammunitions to terrorist groups, is public and documented. American, Turkish and Israeli illegal occupation of parts of the Syrian Territory is also another aspect of prolonging the conflict.

2. The Syrian Arab Republic has repeatedly condemned the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime and under any circumstances. We have repeatedly confirmed that Syria does not possess chemical weapons and has eliminated its chemical program under the supervision of OPCW, as was confirmed in June 2014 to Security Council by the head of UN/OPCW mission Ms. Sigrid Kaag. Questions relating to the Syrian national declaration are duly discussed within the OPCW.

3. As for the question related to NPT, we expect the US and its allies to condemn the Israeli attack on the Syrian Military site instead of blaming Syria, and to put pressure Israel to cooperate with IAEA to clarify the pending questions.

4. As regards the content of the above mentioned statement, I would like to make the following observations:

5. The statement runs counter to the CD Rules of Procedures which guide the work of the Conference. We find it particularly regrettable that the holder of the current presidency of the Conference has decided to take side and subscribe to a controversial demarche which adds to further polarization and division inside the Conference, instead of working tobridge the gaps and ensure consensus on CD annual report.

6. The statement raises issues from outside the purview of the CD and its agenda, role and mandate, and drifts of the Conference into the mandates of other multilateral bodies. The Conference on Disarmament, which was recognized by the first Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly as the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum", should stick to its mandate and refrain from interfering in the functioning of Conventions and their competent mechanisms and allow them space to discharge their respective mandates, without interference. If serious, countries which claim concerns about the use of chemical weapons should allow starting serious negotiations in the CD on a legally binding instrument against the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups.

7. CD members who chose to embark on media campaigns outside the CD Chamber against the Presidency, and chose to systematically undermine the efforts of the ONLY President which worked seriously during 2018 Session to seek consensus on a Program of Work, in implementation of his duties under the Rules of Procedures, did not respect neither rule 9 of the Rules of Procedures, nor rule 3 which provides for the principle of sovereign equality of all nations.

8. The statement confirms that its co-signers did in fact try to undermine the work of the Conference for four weeks of its session and to take it hostage to their political agenda and considerations. Furthermore, coordinators of subsidiary bodies 2 and 4, both co-signers

of the letter, opted for national positions in implementing their mandate and contributed to efforts aimed at undermining the role and authority of the CD.

9. Issues of moral authority and political legitimacy, raised by some members have no regard for the integrity of the high office of the Presidency of the Conference and its Rules of Procedure. Countries which have used chemical, biological and nuclear weapons across their history have no moral legitimacy to judge other countries. The best way to uphold the moral authority of the Conference is not by undermining the office of the Presidency and the Rules of Procedure, but by respecting the institution and its rules. It should be recalled in this regard that introducing extraneous issues as criteria for suitability for CD Presidency is totally absurd. It is totally absurd that Israel, which remains the main threat to the security and stability in the Middle East as the only party in the region which refuses to accede all WMDs prohibition or non-proliferation conventions and continues to possess all types of WMDs, finds itself legally and morally eligible to co-sign the letter and preach the need to maintain international non-proliferation regimes!!! It is further ironic that the three countries which blocked NPT 2015 Review Conference from adopting its final declaration find themselves eligible to preach about the fitness of other countries.